1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941
(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua



534 177 [24] The dwelling may contain a musical instrument or two not necessarily connected with ritual, a one-stringed violin (probably inspired by European models), and more infrequently a flute.

361 621 [602] The elaborate system of affinal avoidances makes it expedient to allow some space between the home of the man who joins the encampment and those of his wife's relatives. Therefore, a distance of two or three hundred paces may separate two dwellings. Each family is afforded privacy, yet relatives and neighbors are near enough in case of danger. The comparative independence of each home is further safeguarded by the nature of the country, by natural barriers which often conceal one dwelling from the next, even though the distance which separates them is not great.

[721] [312] Because these people raid surrounding groups as a regular course, they have reason to fear retaliation and therefore seek to conceal their habitations as much as possible. Desirable locations must be near enough to streams and springs to insure an adequate water supply and close to the highlands so that foes can be led into a fruitless and wearying search through the hills.

361 484 221 [433] [538] The possessions, the materials from which they are made, and the uses which they imply make it plain that the food economy is based on the wild animals and plants of the region and that the people must be ready to follow a seasonal food quest and to remove to a new locality when it becomes apparent that hunting or gathering is more rewarding there. A popular folk tale, explicable in terms of this life, tells how a man becomes separated from the members of his family and seeks to rejoin them, passing camp site after camp site which they have abandoned, until he finally overtakes them. Other accounts describe the frequent movements of the people, with those who have no horses carrying their goods and their children.

361 621 596 [433] [571] Sometimes a single household goes off alone on an economic errand and even remains by itself for some time. But, ordinarily, the extended family breaks camp and moves as a body. It can, therefore, be called the smallest unit prepared to maintain a separate economic existence for any length of time. Thus, even in the midst of the nomadic phase of his life, the most significant social bonds remain undisturbed for the individual.

Despite constant movement, population tends to concentrate

1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941
(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua



names, in order, are: "Little Eagles," "Many Leaves," "Large Leaves," "Large Fruit," "Earth Is Reddish Brown," and "Ghost Face." "Little Eagles" refers to early spring; "Many Leaves" covers the period of late spring and early summer; "Large Leaves" is midsummer; "Large Fruit" (some call this period "Thick with Fruit") designates the harvest time of late summer and early fall. By late fall the hills assume a color for which the term, "Earth Is Reddish-Brown" seems appropriate. Dread of the lifeless winter is expressed in the name, "Ghost Face." The entire year is called "one harvest." "Ten years ago would be ten harvests ago." Periods of time shorter than the six divisions with descriptive names are reckoned from new moon to new moon. "You say so many days from the beginning of the new moon," or, "So many new moons ago." 821 805

If food is to be gathered near home, the woman takes her large burden basket and works alone or with her daughter or sister. "They have a little jug to carry drinking water in while they are away from camp. Often they stay out all day. They eat any time they care to." When a long journey is necessary, a larger party of women will set out together. "They go in groups of six or so and keep their finds separately." Should the destination be so distant that the group cannot hope to return for some days, men or youths go along to protect them and to assist in the heavy work. 222 [482] [415] [264] [484]

Through most of the winter and until mid-spring the household must depend on stored vegetables saved from the preceding year. But in the spring the narrow-leafed yucca sends up a central stem which is gathered while it is still green, tender, and without blossoms. Lengths of the stalk are placed on a bed of embers and roasted until they are soft. The charred outer surface is peeled, and the stalks are eaten without further preparation. Thicker stalks are sometimes roasted in an underground oven. A hole is dug in the earth (one is described as four feet long and three and a half feet deep) and a fire is kindled in it. Stones are heated by placing them on top of the burning wood, and the oven is lined with them. The woman peels the pieces of stalk, pounds them or cuts them in half, places them on the 252 [251] [262] [221]

1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941
(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua



Sometimes the "heads" are carried, on horses, in loosely woven, traylike containers made of yucca, and the sun-drying is done at home. Most of the mescal is stored in the sun-dried, caked state. When a part of a dried crown is to be eaten, it is soaked in water until it softens. It may be mixed with juniper or sumac berries, piñon nuts, or walnuts for variety. The leaves have a pithy, inedible center, but the inner surface of each has a soft layer that is chewed or scraped.

Ordinarily, the woman goes out several times to gather mescal, for she must have enough for general use and for storage. Since each operation—the trip to the place where the plants grow, the roasting and drying, and the return journey—requires several days, this is a busy period. By the time the mescal stalks have flowered and the plants are unfit for use, summer is at hand, and other foodstuffs have made their appearance.

In early summer the locust tree is in flower. The woman picks the blossoms and boils them with meat or other foods, or she boils them in water, dries them in the sun, and puts them away. Then, when she wishes to use them, "she can cook them over again." The first of a number of varieties of wild onion is ready, too. Onions are eaten raw or boiled with other vegetables and meat. Later at least two other kinds are gathered. In the early part of the growing season, too, especially when other food is scarce, the woman strips off the bark from the Western yellow pine, scrapes its inner surface, and heaps together the soft, sweet material.

Though most of the sumac berries are not ripe until late summer and fall, one variety is ready now: "It [*Rhus microcarpa*] has a small red berry which is picked and brought back. The berries are spread out, and the good ones are picked out, washed, and put in the sunshine to dry. After being ground, they are mixed with mescal, and the mixture does not spoil."

From midsummer on, in certain localities, the berries of the one-seeded juniper ripen:

> They have a reddish tinge when they are ripe and fall to the ground. The women pick them up and put them in sacks or burden baskets they bring with them. When they are very ripe, they can be eaten raw, or, if they are still very hard, they can be boiled just enough to make them soft. Another way to use

1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941
(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua



them is to boil them until they are quite soft and then mash them with the hands to get the seeds out. What is left is boiled down until just a thick juice is left. This is used more for health than food, although it is considered a regular food. It has a laxative effect, and we eat it as the white man eats prunes. It has a pleasant taste; you can eat a great deal of it, and it won't do you any harm.

In midsummer, too, the first of the edible seed-bearing plants are ready. The woman gathers the seeds by running her hand through the tops and dropping the seeds in a hide receptacle. Threshing is accomplished by working the seeds around manually in the sack. To winnow them, the seeds are poured from a tray basket to an outstretched hide below. The seeds are boiled and eaten or ground on the metate with the mano and reduced to flour from which bread is made.

Now such fruits as raspberries, strawberries, and the earliest of the wild grapes can be gathered. All these are eaten fresh. Grapes are sometimes dried and preserved, and raspberries may be crushed, dried, and kept in caked form.

In the mountains in late summer the woman finds such varied fruits and plants as the chokecherry, the mulberry, a species of potato (*Solanum jamesii*, Torr.), and wood sorrel. Chokecherries are eaten raw when they are very ripe and not infrequently are dried, ground, and stored. Dried chokecherries are soaked in water and eaten without further preparation. Potatoes are boiled and eaten soon after they are gathered or are dried, stored, and ground into flour for making bread. Mulberries are served fresh or caked and preserved. Wood sorrel is eaten raw or cooked with other greens. Another potato-like food (*Ipomoea lacunosa*) is available at about the same time. "It is like a potato in taste. It's white and looks like an onion, but it doesn't taste anything like an onion. It's about half the size of an onion. These are eaten raw. You can keep them for a couple of weeks."

During the same period, in the lowlands, such plants as the nipple cactus and the pitahaya yield their fruit. Of the latter, the more important of the two, this description is given:

This cactus is like the giant cactus, but smaller. It grows in Old Mexico. The plant is taller than a man. The fruit is as large as a man's fist. When the pod opens, it is ready to be picked. It is ready about the middle of August. The

1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941
(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua



The acorns of both the Gambel oak and the live oak are valuable foods, for the acorn is used in a kind of pemmican: 252 262

In the autumn the women wait until the acorns are ripe and fall to the ground. Then they gather many of them and bring them in. Some people leave them in sacks just as they are when gathered and later crack the shells with their teeth and eat the nuts. [222]

But some roast the nuts a little, crack them, and put them out in the sun to dry. Then they use the nuts with the dry [jerked] deer meat and some fat. First they pound the dry meat on a rock and mix it with a little fat. Then they take the acorn meats and pound them up fine. After that they mix the meat and the acorns together. They shape it like meat balls, and these keep all winter. If they are camping in any place, they can have it for any meal. When it is made this way it is all ready to eat at any time. You eat it just as it is. Because it is all prepared, it is a good thing to take on a journey. When a big group is on a journey and a child is hungry, they give it some of this. 262 251 252 [484]

During the summer and fall the women gather various greens for flavoring stews and soups. Lamb's quarter is one of these. It is cooked with meat or bones, chili, and onions. Locust pods, the white seeds of the anglepod, the seeds of the unicorn plant, and still other varieties of wild potatoes and onions are procured at this time. 222 263 [252] [262] [221]

A number of grasses and other plants (among them dropseed grass, tumbleweed, pigweed, spurge, and sunflower) are harvested for their seeds. Most of these are hand threshed as previously described, or a large amount of the seed-bearing tops is cut, put on a hide, dried, and beaten with a stick. The largest stems and leaves are picked out by hand, and the remainder winnowed "by letting them fall to a hide from a tray basket." The same end may be attained by "tossing the seeds in a hide; then the leaves are blown away." 222 262 252

To obtain sunflower seeds in quantity, the woman fills her burden basket with the flowers and later lays them out to dry at home. When the plants are thoroughly dried, the seeds can easily be shaken out. Or, if the seeds are very ripe, the back of the sunflower head is shaken or is given a sharp blow with a stick, and the seeds fall into a burden basket which has been placed under the plant. These seeds are ground up and are added

1:Opler E-5 (1931-1937)1941
(ca. 1870) NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
Chiricahua



222 252 262 [251] to meat dishes to form a gravy, or they are made into flour for bread baked in hot ashes. Sunflower seeds and other seeds are often placed with hot coals in a tray basket and "worked around" until they are parched.

824 [221] In the fall when the tule is yellow with pollen, the tops of the plants are cut off, brought to camp, and dried. Then the dry tops are shaken or struck over an outspread buckskin. Pollen is gathered, without special ceremony, from other plants and from trees by shaking them after placing a piece of well-tanned, uncolored [237] buckskin to catch it. Buckskin is always the proper receptacle. It is said that "pollen would go through cloth," but more important is the feeling that "it would be wrong" to use anything but buckskin for pollen bags and containers.

222 462 [221] From early spring to the onset of winter, the woman gathers fruits and vegetables which grow at different elevations and in different areas. She does not keep at this task steadily, for she has many other duties. But she must be ready at the report of a good natural harvest to leave at once for the region where it is. 222 484 592 621 [596] Often it is near by; but many times the site is so far distant, and the work ahead so time-consuming, that the entire household goes with her and sets up a temporary camp. Using this as a base, the husband hunts while his wife gathers the wild crop that has drawn them there. Not infrequently more than one household or an extended family consisting of a number of households temporarily leaves the larger encampment or local group on such an errand. Thus, in order that the woman may obtain the various foods in the order in which they mature, the household remains a mobile unit, ready to detach itself from the local group at short notice and to rejoin this group or another just as easily.

222 While the women are foraging, they are on the lookout for beehives:

[824] Honey is found in the stalks of mescal, sotol, and the narrow-leafed yucca. The bee deposits the honey in the stalk. The bee which does this is a big yellow one. The women search for honey in these stalks. They gather it in the fall. They split the stalk to find it. It's like candy. I used to be great for honey!

Honey is also obtained from a large yellow bee that nests in the ground. To secure this store, the device of allowing the bees to

2: Castetter and Opler N, E-5 (1931-1934)1936
NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
CHIRICAHUA
MESCALERO



## GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

101 These Apache were a highly mobile group and their [484] geographical background is, therefore, not so well understood as is that of sedentary tribes. Also in the early days of Spanish penetration they were known by various names and confused with other groups. In view of these circumstances it is impracticable to try to fully describe their geographical setting; hence, only a few examples of this aspect of their environment will be presented.

133 The territory through which they ranged constituted a 137 rich variety topographically and climatically, ranging from the flat lowlands of the Southwest, such as the Tularosa Basin, where sagebrush *(Artemisia filifolia)*, creosote bush, Mormon tea, cacti, yuccas, and mesquite comprise the characteristic vegetation; through the low hills where mescal and sotol abound; the foothills of the mountains where one-seeded juniper, piñon, and three-leaved sumac grow in abundance; to the higher elevations covered by growths of western yel- 132 low pine, spruce, and aspen. The mild, sunny winters and 133 devastatingly hot summers of the lowlands contrasted greatly with the severe, snow-ridden winters of the mountains, although the mountains were cool and invigorating 136 during other seasons of the year. The fauna varied with the 133 elevation, too. In the flats were the prairie dogs, rabbits, and antelope; in the mountains, deer, elk, and mountain sheep.

• 221 Of all this variety the Apache was the master. He moved with the seasonal change of weather, and followed [182] the wild food harvests as they occurred. His adaptation and response to the ecological region in which he lived was sensitive and complete. When the colder weather came he removed to a lower altitude; in summer he was in the high- [222] lands again. When the mesquite and screwbean ripened on the flats, parties of Apache were there to gather them; when the hawthorn hips were ready in the highlands, Apache were nearby to take them. These people knew nature's calendar by heart, and no matter whether a grass seed ripened or a

2: Castetter and Opler N, E-5 (1931-1934) 1936
NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
CHIRICAHUA
MESCALERO



certain animal's fur or flesh was at its best at the particular time, the Apache was present to share in the harvest. 221.

In former times the country of the Apache was a difficult one for the uninitiated to cross. The lowlands were hot and dry and made thorny traveling. A glimpse of water turned out more often to be a mirage. Wide arroyos and washes, cut by the torrential flows which often follow the sudden rains of the surrounding mountains, barred the passage. The tangled brush of the foothills made progress slow, and the high ranges were a formidable barrier to one who was not acquainted with the passes and short cuts. 133 484

The Apache made perfect familiarity with this region in all its aspects an ally to his safety. He knew the water holes of the flats. He knew the travel distance from point to point and, therefore, how much food and water to carry. He was aware of the shortest passes and best hiding places in the mountains. If cut off from his own group, he knew where he was likely to find other parties of Apache camping, and he was trained to endure hardship and to shift for himself in this environment until he could make contact with friends. 133 484 182 823

But, though the Apache helped themselves freely to the plant and animal life of the lowlands, it must not be thought that they felt equally at home in both the plains and the mountains. After all, they were essentially mountain people. In the lowlands they had serious competitors, such as the Plains Indians, whom they acknowledged to be their equals and even their masters in knowledge of such country and its resources. But in the mountains they felt confident and secure. Here they had their retreats and their cave caches of food supply laid up against need and emergency. Army officers have commented often enough upon the difficulty of finding and besting the Apache in their mountain stations. 484 182 823 [186] [251] [648]

For the original habitat of the Mescalero, portions of southern New Mexico may be taken as an example. The west side of the great plains of New Mexico, Texas, and Mexico is a region consisting of isolated mountain ranges and intervening plains or broad, open valleys. Several of these val- 133

2: Castetter and Opler N, E-5 (1931-1934)1936
NT8 Eastern Apache NT8
CHIRICAHUA
MESCALERO

# PLANTS USED BY THE MESCALERO AND CHIRICAHUA APACHE FOR FOOD, DRINK, AND NARCOTICS

## Foods

The stately Agave, a characteristic feature of desert vegetation of southwestern United States, constituted a very important source of vegetal food for these Apache. Several native species were utilized, but the most abundant one in the area was *Agave parryi*, commonly known as mescal or century plant (although these common names apply equally well to several other species). Contrary to popular opinion, the Agave bloom in much less than one hundred years; however, each plant blooms only once, after which the leaves wither and die. Around the dead plants are usually to be seen a number of young plants formed from suckers of the parent plant. It is from the food itself, known as mescal, prepared from *Agave parryi*, that the Mescalero Apache have been given their name *(28:*455).

Although not so extensively as formerly the Apache women still make expeditions to regions where Agave grows in abundance for the purpose of collecting the edible portions of the plant. These visits are usually made in late May or early June when the reddish flower stalks begin to appear and the plants are most palatable. Plants not blooming are known as "man" plants; those bearing a flower stalk are designated as "woman," and the Indians advise against using the "man" plants for food since they are bitter and spoil all mescal with which they are baked. This is because the "man" is smoking and the smoke permeates all the mescal in the pit. The "man" changes into "woman" when it flowers, then dries up and is gone.

The crowns of the mescal plants are dug out with three-foot sticks cut from oak branches *(Quercus* sp.) and flattened at the end. This end, when pounded with a rock into the stem of the plant just below the crown, permits the crown to be removed readily. A broad stone knife is used